
FIRE FACT NO. 032 CHECKLIST(s) : 06
TITLE : FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS MANUAL PULL LOCATIONS
CHECKLIST ITEM(s) : 06-47
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Most buildings in Kansas have non-compliant stairs, corridors, fire alarms, and sprinkler systems. Kansas Statute requires the Fire Marshal to allow existing non-conforming buildings to remain in continuous operation unless they are deemed to have “distinctly hazardous” conditions, which must be corrected. A “distinctly hazardous” condition is defined by the Kansas State Fire Marshal as anything which may impede speedy exiting or the evacuation of the building occupants.

The lack of sufficient fire alarm pull stations along exit paths is considered an impediment to speedy notification and results in a slower evacuation of the building occupants. The Kansas State Fire Marshal considers building occupant notification second in importance to exiting for most existing occupied buildings. The impact of fire related injuries or deaths would most likely be reduced if occupants could exit a building by the shortest exit route and notify the rest of the building occupants by activating the fire alarm system.

Manual fire alarm pull stations shall be located in the occupant exit path:

- from all REQUIRED EXTERIOR exits from a building, and;
- at intervals of no more than 200 feet apart within the building, and;
- at exits from all floor levels, and;
- from rooms with exterior exits USED by building occupants when a manual fire alarm system is required.

When manual fire alarm pulls are not in these required areas, we ask our inspectors to identify this as a distinctly hazardous condition. The building owners and operators and the Kansas State Fire Marshal may collectively develop an acceptable response to this distinctly hazardous condition, assuring that all building occupants will evacuate the building as quickly as possible.

Schools

Schools are one of the Kansas State Fire Marshal’s primary responsibilities. Most schools are unique in building configuration. The Uniform Building Code requires an approved fire alarm system in all new educational occupancies with over 50 occupants total in the building. All educational occupancies are required to have manual fire alarm systems by the Kansas Fire Prevention Code. The Kansas State Fire Marshal further requires all interconnected school buildings to be protected by a single fire alarm system, sounding throughout the building.



Kansas State Fire Marshal Prevention Division

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Many schools constructed under the Uniform Building Code in Kansas have opted to provide exterior exit doors from their classrooms. Due to the availability of the exterior exit, the Uniform Building Code would have allowed the rated corridor protection to be deleted. The normal path of exit from these classrooms is then directly to the exterior. Even with this added feature, which allows students to exit the building without entering any other building atmosphere, each classroom exit to the exterior must still have a pull station.

Consider a multiple classroom building where each classroom has a direct exit to the outside. If a fire starts in one of these classrooms, the immediate threat to the room occupants may not be the most serious concern. All room occupants would be able to exit safely and directly to the outside using their exterior exit door, but without the rated corridor or other design features meant to contain the fire to one location, students in other classrooms would be threatened. With the fire alarm pull station located by this exterior door, the students and teacher would be able to notify the rest of the building of the imminent threat, even as they are evacuating the building.

Manual fire alarm pulls are expected to be at logical locations, which is why they are required at exterior doors used as exits. Schools have been required by the Kansas State Fire Marshal to provide diagrams of their exit paths. These diagrams can assist schools in determining the best minimal locations for manual pull devices. Occasionally, there are conditions where the addition of a manual fire alarm pull will not incrementally increase fire and life safety, and no additional requirements would be made. This is a judgement call based on information provided to the Kansas State Fire Marshal inspector responsible for enforcement actions.

